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FOUR SERMONS,
ON
PUBLIC OCCASIONS.

BY
C. FLEET, M.A.

TWO SHILLINGS.



FOUR
SERMONS,

ON

PUBLIC OCCASIONS.

BY

C. FLEET, M. A.

*Rector of Durweston and Bryanston, in the County of Dorset,
and
Late Fellow of King's College, Cambridge.*

Salisbury:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY J. EASTON;

Sold also by

G. & T. WILKIE, PATER-NOSTER-RROW, AND J. DEIGHTON, HOLBORN,
LONDON; J. LUNN, CAMBRIDGE; MESSRS. FLETCHER & CO.
OXFORD; AND W. SOLLERS, BLANDFORD.

1796.

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TO
E. B. PORTMAN, ESQ.

AS A
TESTIMONY OF RESPECT,
ARE INSCRIBED

BY THE
AUTHOR,

THE FOLLOWING
SERMONS,

Which, considering the Doctrines of
the present Day, may not, it is hoped,
be thought unseasonable----or unac-
ceptable to the PUBLIC.

THE

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

UNITED STATES

OF AMERICA

ARTICLE

I

Section 1

All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 2

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A

SERMON

PREACHED

BEFORE

The University of Cambridge,

IN

King's College Chapel,

ON

MARCH 25,

1786,

BEING FOUNDER'S DAY.

B

SERMON I.

1771

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN SEPTEMBER

By the Rev. Mr. [Name],
Pastor of the Church of the
[Name], [Location].

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN SEPTEMBER
[The text of the sermon follows, but is extremely faint and largely illegible due to fading and bleed-through from the reverse side. It appears to be a standard sermon structure with an opening, a main body of text, and a closing.]

SERMON I.

JOHN i. 46.

Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come, and see.

THE GOOD THING which Nathanael speaks of here, may bear relation to these words, in the thirty-third chapter of Jeremiah, *I will perform that GOOD THING I promised*, which, in the sequel, is explained to mean, *his causing the Branch of righteousness, or the Messiah, to grow up unto David.*—That **BETHLEHEM** had been foretold to be the birth-place of the

Messiah, was sufficiently understood before his appearance.—Nathanael's question, therefore, in reply to Philip, who had informed him—that *he was found, of whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph*—seems to amount to this—How it were possible, that the Messiah—or that **GOOD THING**, as he expresses it, should come out of **NAZARETH**, when it had been declared by the ancient prophecies, that Christ should be born at **BETHLEHEM** in the land of Juda.

Another interpretation of the text (and which falls in more directly with my design in this discourse) makes Nathanael's doubt to arise from the well-known prejudices against Nazareth, as a place of wickedness and ill repute. By the account *St. LUKE* gives of its situation, we may suppose Nazareth to have been an uncivilized place, as it was, in a great measure, cut off from society, or communication with other towns—and by his repre-

representation of the behaviour of the inhabitants towards our Saviour, we may conclude they were an unfeeling, barbarous people.

Reasoning, then, from the established order of moral causes, and their effects, Nathanael judged it impossible, that the Messiah should come out of Nazareth—so holy and dignified a character, from so wicked and contemptible a place.

The Providence of God, however, is not more remarkably displayed in that regular system of causes, which operate usually to the production of their appointed ends—than in those extraordinary interpositions, which sometimes happen to controul and counteract the ordinary course of things.—*GRATEFUL* should we be, indeed, to the favor of that divine Providence, which, thus, by means the most unexpected—out of evil can produce good—out of the weak and wicked practices

of mankind can derive the most inestimable blessings.

To compare now the occasion of our present meeting, with this sense of, and reasoning on the text:

The institution we commemorate, took place, is certain, in an illiterate and corrupted age. Review but that page of history, which sets before us the religion of those days.—If tyranny and oppression, violence and injustice, fraud and cunning, avarice and extortion, can be called religion—this was the religious system of the times we mention. The Pope was not more despotic—than his clergy were corrupted and licentious, the people ignorant and superstitious.—A number of unmeaning ceremonies, a splendid shew of religious apparatus in their public worship, served to strike the eye, while the heart remained untouched.—Solemn attitudes, without a serious thought—instruction, which meant deception—characterized the office,

office, and sanctimonious appearance of their Priests.—Neither true piety, nor unaffected devotion, sound sense, nor strict reason, were to be found in their whole religion. It was adapted only to promote the profit, and to support the temporal power and authority of the Clergy. To this purpose, all its doctrines tended. Invention was set to work, to help the wretched cause of imposition. Miracles were feigned—fables raised—suppositious writings quoted—epistles counterfeited—the Fathers perverted—and even the Scriptures altered to assist in this holy cheat.

To recommend its doctrines, this church did not fail to imitate (though from a bad motive) the example of St. Paul. The craft of the serpent here put on the innocence of the dove. Every temper was consulted, every palate gratified.—To the weak in faith, an asylum given—for who is ignorant, of the pretended infallibility of this church?—To the bold and confident, full scope to indulge their censures

—for who is ignorant of its uncharitable condemnation of all who differed from it? —To the covetous, a means of securing riches—for who is ignorant that this was its trade?—To the voluptuous, prospects of pleasure—for who is ignorant, that women have governed Rome, and made Bishops, at their will, of boys, parasites, and buffoons?—To the wicked, security—for who is ignorant of its pardons and indulgencies?—To the rich, an easy admittance into the kingdom of Heaven—for who is ignorant, as an atonement for their sins, of the many valuable endowments of convents, and the pious custom of paying for mass prayers?—To the poor, a relief to their necessities—for who is ignorant, of the bribery practised by ostentatious charity, to gain converts to their communion?—We might go on, and say —To the proud and solemn, were adapted pomp and pageantry—To the gay, jubilees and festivals—To the morose, mortifications, penances, and abstinence;—for, in short, this church studied every device,

device, and made itself all things to all men, that by any means, it might gain the more.

To be infallible, and to have issued out contradictory decrees both by its Popes and councils—To be supreme, and to have had its jurisdiction and authority rejected by the greatest part of the Christian church—To lock away the Scriptures, by a knowledge of which cometh the only means of salvation, and at the same time to deny that salvation to all, who enjoyed a free use of the Scriptures out of their communion—were happy contradictions, which distinguished the Church of Rome. There is no need to mention, their idolatrous worship of saints and angels, images and relics—the exemption of their Clergy from temporal jurisdiction—their various persecutions—their justification by good works (particularly those of pious offerings to their Clergy, and contributions to their several churches and monasteries)—their doctrine of purgatory—and many other

other absurdities, all of which, are calculated merely (religion out of the question) to fill the coffers, and to aggrandize the power of the Pope and Clergy.

Amid so great a degree of perversion and corruption, should any good man have thought fit, in that age, to preach the doctrine of the gospel—to set forth the divine authority of the Scriptures—to teach the worship of God alone, by the only mediation of his Son Jesus Christ—and to recommend charity to all mankind, as the great duty of a religious life—however such endeavours might have been useful to Christianity, they would have ill suited the cause of papacy. That this is no exaggerated account of the religious system in the times we speak of, the history of those times will testify. So truly miserable was the condition of the Church about the middle of the fifteenth century, that the necessity of a reformation, was the universal persuasion of all Europe. To those read in this part of history, are well

well known the two great councils of *CONSTANCE* and *BASIL* holden with a view to this important object.

From this description given, can it be supposed, that out of so much evil, could be produced any great or extensive good?—from so impure a fountain, could flow the living waters we are at this day supplied with?—We must remember, however, that church establishments constitute not the essence of Christianity—that the fury and delusion of particular sects, affect not the purity of religion.—Whoever is acquainted with the character of our Founder, knows that his whole conduct was directed by religious principle: It was this engaged him in the munificent undertaking we commemorate.—As connected, therefore, with the superstitious influence of the times, our institution may not be unaptly illustrated by a comparison in the eleventh of the Romans—as a branch indeed of the *wild olive*, but, which grafted *contrary to nature* into the
good

good olive tree, flourishes by virtue of its root.

To speak a word or two, now, on the nature and excellency of this institution. There is no need to dwell on either before this assembly, as most of us present enjoy similar benefactions, and cannot but be acquainted with them.

It must be acknowledged, that every disinterested mode of charity, carries with it a double commendation.—It is the characteristic excellency of our nature, described by the Apostle, *to give, and hope for nothing in return*.—Every partial, accidental act of liberality is occasioned usually either by some peculiarity of distress, or circumstance of endearment, which, by extorting charity, as it were, reduces its value, and renders it at best but a negative virtue. The finer feelings have not room to exert themselves here. The more severe trials of unseen affliction, and disguised misfortune, of retired, unrewarded
merit

merit in distress, cannot present themselves, nor have any share in this bounty.—A disinterested desire, then, of advancing the general interest and happiness of mankind, by anticipating their several wants, in the establishment of public benefactions (such as this we are considering) denotes a generous greatness of soul, which affords an exalted conception of human nature.—Our most perfect notions of the *DEITY* consist in the idea of that universal unbiaſſed benevolence, which admits of no reserve or partiality, as it can never be restrained by any limit, nor influenced by any passion.

To be best acquainted with the excellency of our institution, we should refer to our own feelings—and consider, in what other path of life we could have been better situated. Are honor—power—liberty—ease—safety—with a competency for life, and an opportunity of improving our intellectual endowments, whether in a civil or religious capacity, to the best
advan-

advantage—desirable objects with us? Are these what are styled the general blessings of life?—You cannot mention the station in which these are enjoyed in a more eminent degree.—We are exempt too from worldly cares—we are uninterrupted by the noise and bustle of active life—we are undisturbed by the crosses and disappointments, which fret, and too often ruin the dispositions of other men—we have every supply that is wanting, not only for the necessities, but even, in some measure, for the elegancies of life;—in short, it may be said to us, as to the Israelites—*we have a land for which we did not labour—wells which we digged not—cities which we builded not—vineyards and olive trees which we planted not—and houses full of good things, which we filled not.*

Being, then, secluded, by the excellency of our institution, from the hurry and confusion of the world—we are called here to the retired scene of contemplation—and peace—and knowledge,—Our employment
is

is not that of manual skill and labour, from which, by our situation, we are exempted, nay, which, by our laws, we are forbidden—but consists, in the more glorious operations of the mind—the investigation of truth—the acquisition of learning—and the improvement of reason.—And as the enlargement of the understanding has in effect no better end, than the correction and amendment of the heart (without which end, all intellectual endowments, of whatever sort, are vain and useless)—it follows, that the institution of these societies conspires with the very aim of our Being, by leading on our natures to perfection, and filling up the designs of Providence, in our attainment of everlasting felicity.—We have every incentive that is needful to make us wise—and good—and happy.—As a generous emulation too, and mutual benefit, is sure to attend the free communication of so many different geniuses and dispositions met together, and all eager for the same prize of superior wisdom—so wisdom it-
self

self is most easily attained, where arts and sciences, by their social growth, afford assistance to each other.

But there is no necessity of insisting longer on this subject.—The advantages of this place are sufficiently known to us; and the consideration of them should teach us to beware of the abuse of them.—As it is our duty, so should it be our endeavour, by all possible means, in the different departments we occupy, to further the design of our respective Founders and Benefactors.—Let a sense of gratitude to them, be impressed on our minds—let it be acknowledged by a careful attention to our conduct—let the recollection of their examples stimulate us to an imitation of their virtues—that we may bring forth the fruit of a serviceable and well-improved life, to the honor and praise of their names and memories. We are too apt to think lightly of this matter, and to neglect the duties of our situation. We know that by statute—by oath—by honor—by every
princi-

principal of reason and conscience, we are bound to live up to the rules, and to regard the true spirit of our institution. If we violate those rules, and disregard that spirit, we abuse the charity we enjoy, and the trust which is reposed in us.

We boast indeed of an enlightened age—and look back with contempt on the superstitious ignorance of former times.—Shall it be said, then, that the improvements in our literary acquirements, carry no proportionate degree of amendment in our manners?—that as the restoration of letters proved fatal to the cause of popery, so there is danger with us that the increase of them should prove injurious to Christianity? We hope this is not the case.—It is surely a malicious and envious task in those, who would insinuate, that these seats of learning are the nurseries of vice and immorality—that, while, on the one hand, they lead to a disregard of all religion, on the other, they infect us with the contagious influence of enthusiasm.—

It has been objected, however, against us, that the original intention of our foundations is perverted—that discipline is neglected—that appearances are kept up, while essentials are disregarded—that religion and learning are here separated—that social virtues are deserted—and that our youth is trained up in all the modes of fashionable dissipation and extravagance. Whether this be a fair representation or not (we trust not) these objections are daily urged. It is our duty, then, to refute such censures, by a strict adherence to the pious intent of our Founders.—The *EXPENSE* attending an academical education, is now become a subject of very general complaint. Some remedy has been endeavoured to be applied to this evil, by a late edict—and if this were succeeded by others of the same nature, and all as carefully enforced—as they were well intended—the credit and interest of this place would be wisely consulted. By such a conduct, we should shew mankind, that we were in earnest in maintaining our
real

real dignity—in making these societies (what they ought to be) the source of wisdom and religion—and thereby the support and ornament of the *ENGLISH NATION*.

To the junior part of this audience, I would say, that if they wish to consult their real welfare in life, they would do well to subscribe to this doctrine. They should consider seriously the end for which they are sent here—that they are not sent to judge for themselves—but to take the judgment of others for the direction of their conduct. Whatever at present may be their notions of the hardships of restraint and discipline—these notions will alter as they advance in years. Moved by a sense of shame at their own ignorance and insufficiency, they will then, perhaps, blame the University for the want of that order and subjection, which they are now so impatient to confound.

To further, thus, the intent of our
 c 2 Founder,

Founder, by living up to the rules of our institution, seems the best method of expressing our gratitude to his memory. By such a method, too, we consult the true end of a *UNIVERSITY EDUCATION*, which will ever be able, I trust, to support itself against the attacks of all its enemies——And should, then, any Nathanael say unto us—*Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* *WE*, with Philip, will say unto *HIM*——*COME AND SEE.*



A
SERMON
PREACHED
AT THE
VISITATION,
AT
BLANDFORD,
ON
JULY 17,
1794.

SERMON II.

ROMANS ii. 23, 24.

*Thou that makest thy boast of the Law,
through breaking the Law, dishonorest
thou God? For the name of God is blas-
phemed among the Gentiles, through you.*

WE KNOW that these words are part of that animated reproof of St. Paul to the Jews, who were so apt to accuse the Gentile converts of crimes they themselves committed, and justified on *their* part, under pretence, that circumcision itself was of sufficient virtue to make them acceptable with God. They were too much

given to confide in the merits of their Father Abraham, fondly conceiting, that his *good* works had a dispensing kind of power to cancel all their *wicked* deeds, and save them from the inflictions of divine vengeance. They studied, and they knew the Law—and chose rather to trust to their knowledge, than their obedience of it. As they sinned with *knowledge*, so they thought they might sin with *impunity*.

Many and great indeed were the *real* privileges ascribed by the Apostle to this chosen people. *To them pertained the adoption—and the glory—and the covenant—and the giving of the Law—and the service of God—and the promises: Theirs were the Fathers—and of them as concerning the flesh Christ came.*—The miraculous events of our Lord's coming—his birth—his life—his death—his resurrection and ascension—all happened within the confines of Judea. The Jewish writings, of course, were every where appealed to, as the great test of the Christian religion. This gave
the

the Jews great authority over the Gentile converts, and an advantage, which they might have improved much to the edification and benefit of these newly converted Christians, but which, by their conduct, tended only to *corrupt them from the simplicity that was in Christ*. They themselves *offended*—and by this means were the *occasion that others offended*.

To confute these errors, and make known the dangerous consequences of such an example, was the drift of St. Paul in the two first chapters of his Epistle to the Romans.

His reasoning on this occasion is as convincing, as his language is eloquent—and his rebuke was both keen and just.

“ Behold,” says he, “ thou art called a Jew—and retest in the Law—and makest thy boast of God;—and knowest his will—and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Law
—and

—and art confident, that thou thyself art a guide of the blind—a light of them which are in darkness—an instructor of the foolish—a teacher of babes—which hast the form of knowledge, and of the truth in the Law.—Thou, therefore, which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?—Thou, that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?—Thou, that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?—Thou, that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?—*Thou, that makest thy boast of the Law—through breaking the Law, dishonorest thou God?—For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, through you.*”

It is not my design, from the representation here given of Jewish sin and hypocrisy, to draw any unfair and odious comparison between the enormities of *their* crimes, and our own conduct—or by attributing charges of so heavy a nature to the Clergy (which God forbid we should deserve)

deserve) to pass any ill-timed and unjust censure on an Order of men—as religious—as enlightened—and as useful, I believe, as exists in the known world—but to infer such truths as may fairly be deduced from the Apostle's statement, and which, in these times, on our present meeting, may not, I hope, be altogether unseasonable or unacceptable.

We cannot but be aware, then, how indispensibly necessary it is for us at this particular crisis, to use the utmost circumspection and caution—to exert all our activity and zeal in the various duties of our profession—to watch our enemies—to guard ourselves—to forewarn and forearm our people against the wicked and perfidious devices of the day—that they be not *carried about with divers and strange doctrines*—or as the Apostle says in another place—*tossed too and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive—but mark them, which*
cause

cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which they have learned, and avoid them. And this leads to a more general consideration of the times in which we live—on which, if we seriously reflect—

Never was there a period, when we were encompassed with greater dangers. Or—is it not true, that the same unnatural and insidious attempts, which brought on a calamitous and woful rebellion in the last century, are forming and fomenting against the government and constitution of our country, at this moment?—with this additional evil likewise—that a phrenetic spirit hath gone forth among mankind—a spirit of carnage—rapine—blood—and every thing that is horrid in conception to the human mind.——What tongue is able to express, what pen describe, the unheard of massacres which have lately taken place in another kingdom? History is at a loss to parallel them—Posterity will scarce believe them to be true.

Neither

Neither is it the question, as in former times, what shall be our government? who our governors? but whether any such thing as government shall exist at all.—Perfect equality, which is perfect nonsense—Liberty, which means licentiousness—Reason, which is another name for irreligion—are the bewitching doctrines of the day: and such notions brought forward and espoused by men of literary labour and attainments.—O the perversion of God's best gift, the human intellect!—O the insanity of philosophy in the present age!—This philosophy has been its bane and ruin. Every little dabbler in science fancies himself now-a-days a great philosopher—and big in his own conceit, is willing at once to cope with Heaven.

Such being the state of things, we see how incumbent it is on us to use our best endeavours in our different stations for the public welfare. In the scale of all political good, nothing has greater weight than the zealous, unremitting exertions of
the

the Clergy. We do not want ability. Men of parts and learning abound as much in the clerical as in any profession. As strong motives likewise to activity—as high a sense of professional merit ought to fill our minds, and lead them to a conscientious discharge of the important duties of our station—while the more sordid and vulgar holds of immediate interest and necessity have but little claim on the attention of men whose purposes are truly noble, and the object of whose designs is extended far beyond the advantages of the present life.

It was intended, that we should be trained from our infancy by education to the most liberal view of things. And this is one reason among others, why a public and *UNIVERSITY* education is so necessary and desirable an attainment with us.—Besides, that it is the best, if not the only test of qualification at ordination.—It is of consequence to us in these times to have men who will not discredit, who will not undig-

undignify their profession. Learning, it is true, is not local.—It is an absurd, a narrow idea to suppose it.—But if it be necessary for those, who mean to engage in the ministry, to qualify themselves by the best means for their particular calling—and in order to this, to advance their being to the highest state, by perfecting Nature in all her various endowments—if it be their duty to be scholars—and so to enlarge their knowledge by increasing the inlets to it from the study of languages, as well as to store their minds with the choicest notions, by perusal of the most useful authors—if in addition to these acquirements, it be an object to train the mind to sentiments of the strictest honor, liberality, and public virtue—where with so much reason can such requisites be hoped for, as in seminaries instituted for these very purposes?—They there neither want help to support, nor opportunity to favor, nor encouragement to exite their endeavours —They have the advantage of precepts to direct,

direct, and the force of example to animate them in their pursuit.

I have said thus much on this head, because the admission of men of *UNACADEMICAL* education, has done much harm, and been perhaps one great cause of the increase of our dissenters.—We, thereby, weaken ourselves and strengthen our enemies.—But every thing which tends to lessen us in the eyes of the people, is a cause of this opposition to our establishment, and that diminution of credit, which our religion daily suffers—whether it be insufficiency in literary attainments, or insufficiency of character and conduct.—If the people see us, resident, as far as we are able, in our parishes—diligent in our callings—able in our instructions—exemplary in our lives and manners—reserved and decorous in our deportments—and instant, in season and out of season, to do all the good we can in our different departments—they, then, judge us to be in good earnest in our profession, reasonably suppose

pose it to have some important end, and are brought to acknowledge and act under the influence of the religion we teach.—

If, on the contrary, they observe a general disregard of residence on our livings—an inattention and indifference to our several duties—a want of ability in our instructions—no reserve or decency in our manners or dress—a vitious habit and appearance in our examples—and an universal dissipation of thought in our pursuit of pleasures—they are apt to think us so many impostors upon the public, to think ill of our profession, and to treat with ridicule and contempt the religion it professes.—

To have attained indeed the character of a deep divine, must be the effect of great abilities, and a long course of reading and reflection—but it is not the *least* effect of intellectual endowments and a strong understanding, to have acquired a mastery over the grosser passions, to have fixed the limits of self-gratification, and to have induced habits of self-denial and self-respect. This forms the character of a well-

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improved

improved Christian—and such a character in a clerical capacity, must have great weight. In short, there cannot be too much discipline and appearance kept up among us in these times.—By discipline and appearance is not meant, that essentials at all are to be disregarded. The only way to appear good, is to be really so—and then, *our light will so shine before men, that they will see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven.*

We know that it is by the good Providence of God, through the wisest exertions of our present governors, we have escaped from evils of a very serious nature both in Church and State. Treasonable commitments are now on foot——Let us hope they will lead to a happy end. We have seen the wretched effects of sceptic philosophers and infidels, of mechanical politicians and divines, in a neighbouring nation. We know, that we are surrounded by men of the same infection. It is our duty, by every means in our power, to
guard

guard against them—to protect ourselves. God forbid! that ever we should speak reproachfully or disdainfully of any because they dissent from us in matters of opinion and faith. Let us quarrel with no man on account of his religious tenets or opinions, as such—Those are between his God and himself—To his own master he standeth or falleth—But when we see the State endangered, and all government threatened, by the wicked machinations of those, who hold certain principles and doctrines with a view to create division and civil discord—it is, then, time for us surely to make a stand.—General reflections on any set of people which are not drawn from reality, are unjustifiable at any time, and unbecoming in this place. To be acquainted with the nature and designs of men, we should observe them in private life. They are oftentimes most active, when they appear most quiet—and are most to be apprehended in their retreat. Men of sense and virtue, and good moral lives, will consider—that it is no small

degree of morality, to be peaceably inclined towards our neighbours, and to make good subjects under the government we chance to live. It is not our wish by railing accusation to prefer against any a charge, that is not deserved. On the contrary, it is our wish to avoid offence. Such, however, as are discontented members of the constitution, and inimical to our form of government, must surely now have learnt that neither their numbers—their interest—nor their consequence—are of that concern in the public estimation which was at one time supposed. It would be matter of poor triumph to us, to exult at all in political defeats: but matter of much comfort, it truly is, that the nation is found so generally averse to principles which can only tend to beget confusion and every evil work.

Moderation and candour are certainly due to the prejudices of any who differ from us by education and habit—but what shall we say to those, who have been bred
up

up among ourselves, and are disaffected members of our own establishment? How these men—who (by whatever means they gained admission into the Church) are daily fed at her altar—can reconcile a conduct of this kind to any religion or conscience, I am at a loss to understand.—Since they *are not of us*, why will they (in Scripture language) *continue with us*? Why will they not *go out from us*—that they may be *made manifest*, they are not of us?—We shall have a better opinion of their sincerity, and will most readily forgive their departure. But while they *remain with us*, we have a right to say, they are, in the literal sense of the words, *wolves in sheep's clothing*—or under the attire of a gown and cassock (as has been well observed of them) are acting their part only in masquerade.

It remains now for us to impress upon our minds a due sense of these truths.—Let us not any longer be indolently indifferent to our own security.—Let us set

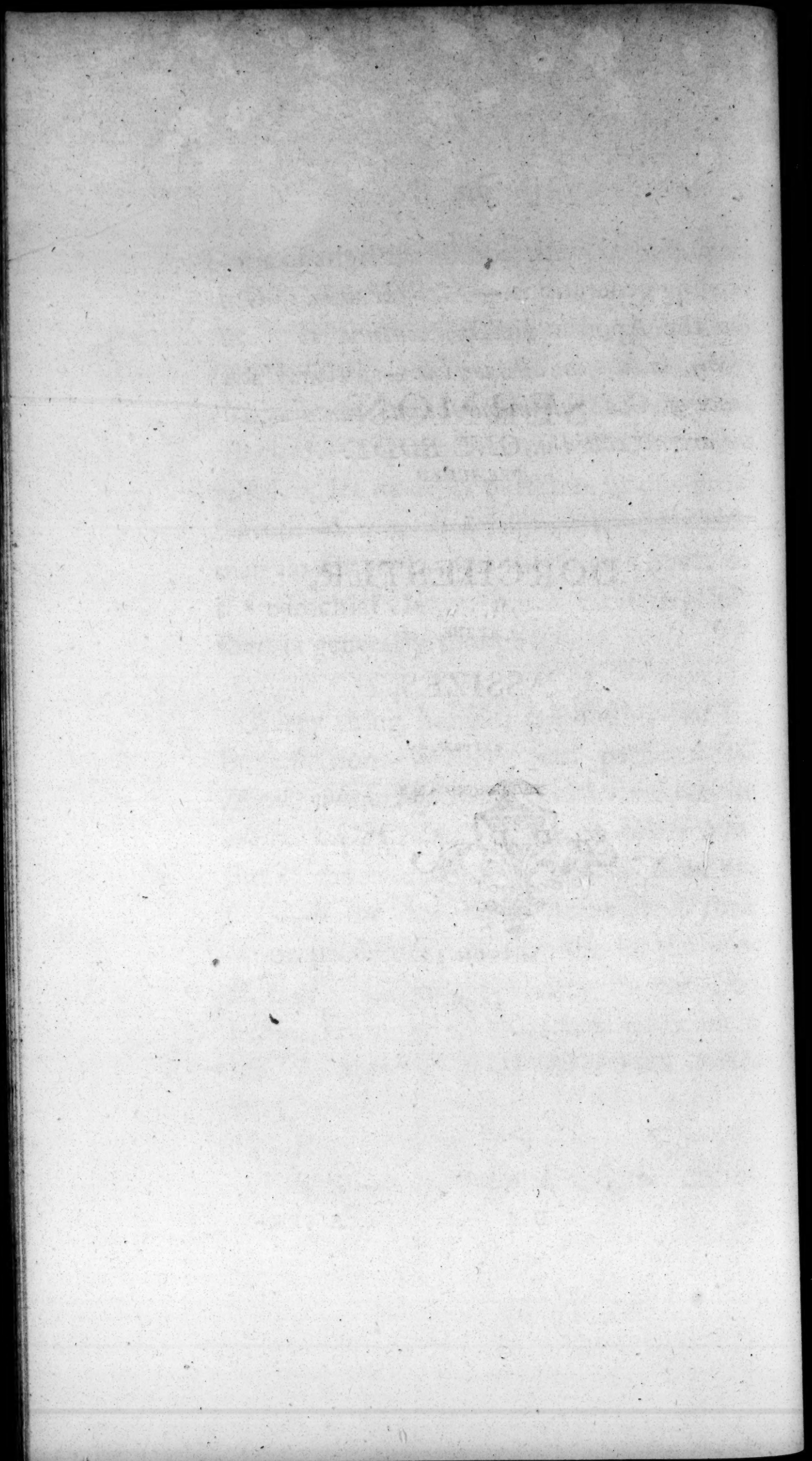
the proper value upon those blessings we possess.—Let us, with our lives and fortunes, be ready to defend our *KING* and *COUNTRY*, and happy constitution in Church and State, whenever they may be attacked.—For the honor of God and our religion, let us exert ourselves in our profession.—Let no man disgrace it—Let each man do his part.—On the joint labours of the parochial clergy, much more depends than is generally thought.

Every thing human, no doubt, has its imperfection.—*We are not, perhaps, all Israel, who are of Israel, neither because we are the seed of Abraham, are we all children.* But if causes may be judged of from effects—if the *tree may be known by its fruit*—our profession can furnish, in the present day, as great a variety as any profession whatever of characters eminent in life, for their religious and learned qualifications.

May this *lamp*, then, which now shines,
be

be preserved with additional light to succeeding generations.—*May the word of God (as the Apostle directs) continue to dwell richly in us in all wisdom—and may the peace of God rule in our hearts, unto which we are all called in ONE BODY.*





A
SERMON

PREACHED

AT

DORCHESTER,

AT THE

ASSIZES,

BEFORE

THE HONOURABLE

Sir R. Perryn, Knt.

ON

MARCH 11,

1796.

THE UNIVERSITY OF

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SERMON III.

PSALM CXXii. 3, 4, 5.

Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity in itself:—For thither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord, to testify unto Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord:—For there is the seat of Judgment: even the seat of the house of David.

THE PSALM from which these words are taken, is expressed by the holy Penman in the warmest language of attachment to the peace and prosperity of his country. *That* peace and prosperity is supposed by him to consist in the union
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of religious and civil government, which in his time so happily prevailed in the royal city.—There was the seat of the *ark of God*—there was the *seat of judgment*, even the *seat of the house of David*. From these fountains of righteousness and equity, flowed those waters which benefited and purified all the cities of Israel.

From the same sources have issued those streams of prosperity and happiness which every nation under Heaven hath enjoyed, more or less at different times, according as it has adhered to, or deviated from the rules founded on these powerful principles.—In short, the natural connection between religion and government—the necessary alliance between church and state in all civilized countries—are subjects, that have exercised the pens of the greatest men, and the ablest writers in their defence. These are propositions so well established, as to have been long received and admitted among us as general axioms,

axioms.—It is not my design, therefore, to tread much in this beaten path, or hazard an offence by a repetition of stale arguments in favor of a subject, on which illumination itself could scarce throw a light. It will be more to the present purpose, perhaps, to endeavour to enforce such duties as arise out of these acknowledged principles, rather than dwell upon those reasons, which have been already urged with the most happy efficacy in support of the principles themselves.—Indeed, these duties in their very nature—as they receive light from, so will they reflect back light upon such principles:—as they are manifested by them, so will they help to strengthen and confirm the proof, in favor of the propriety and utility of them.

I begin, then, with a consideration of those duties incumbent upon all, who think a religious establishment essential to the welfare of any community: and in order to a clearer view of this part of our subject,

subject, it may be best, perhaps, to consider what religion teaches.

Now religion teaches us the *FEAR OF GOD*.—This is the very hinge on which all our virtue turns. Take away this hinge, and a door is open to every vice, that can disgrace our nature. Does not the Law suppose as much in the form it uses, by attributing all crimes of a notorious kind to the offenders, not *having had the FEAR OF GOD before their eyes?* Were but this fear a little more prevalent than it is, we should not see such a List of Criminals as we too often do, brought up to the bar of justice to be tried.—*The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom*, was the admonition first given (as is probable) to *ADAM*, on his transgression to sin, in hope of obtaining wisdom. On the sense of his guilt, he *hid himself from the presence of the Lord God*. On a conviction of his mistake, and through a dread of his punishment, he formed, no doubt, the
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most pious resolutions of amendment.—
 At that instant, the fear of God sufficiently possessed his soul.—And who are there among all the sons of Adam, even the most wicked and abandoned, that do not, at certain seasons, both think and feel the same?—When under the imputation and sense of guilt, and the expectation of punishment for it—when reserved in chains, and brought forth to judgment, to receive their awarded sentence—perhaps that of *DEATH*—how would such unhappy wretches in their sad state, wish to *hide themselves* for ever (if possible) *from the presence of their God*—how gladly would they cry (if they could do it with effect) *to the hills and mountains to cover them*—how close with any proposal of amendment in future, for the sake of their present pardon?—The apprehension of God's presence equally keeps us from the commission of evil, and alarms us under it. It is the hope of secrecy that tends, as much as any thing, to produce sin: but
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this hope vanishes at the recollection of a God, who *seeth in secret*.—Crimes of magnitude are chiefly committed in the dark, when every eye is shut—but *the darkness is no darkness to him—the night is as clear as the day—the darkness and light to him are both alike.*

THE FEAR OF GOD, then, where it is encouraged and prevails, is a happy hindrance to the commission of all crimes—and as religion teaches this fear of God, so it teaches likewise a *REVERENCE OF HIS NAME.*

On this duty is founded the obligation of all oaths, without which no human society can well long subsist. An oath is looked upon, and justly so, as the most sacred tie between man and man. It is the most solemn appeal to God, as a witness of the truth of what we assert, and an avenger of the crime, in case what we assert be not the truth. It is the best stay
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of government—a mutual security between Prince and Subject, all governors and the governed, for protection and obedience—it is a pledge in all compacts—in civil controversies an *end of all strife*. It should never be administered but with solemnity—nor taken without reverence.—It allows of no equivocation—no mental reserve.—It is one of the greatest crimes when taken falsely, as it must be taken intentionally—and it is in that case treason against society, and rebellion against God.—*JURORS AND WITNESSES* will, no doubt, well consider the nature and obligation of this most sacred bond. For as Moses well expresses it—*If a man swear an oath, he binds his SOUL with a bond.*

Religion again teaches us the right use and exercise of *CONSCIENCE*. Human laws can touch only overt acts.—Religion regulates the conscience and intention.—Conscience of itself is a knowledge or sense of moral good and evil—but can

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guide no farther than our knowledge goes. It is too weak in nature, too easily led aside by the corruption of our passions, and the corruption of the world, to answer its end in the important uses of life, without *RELIGIOUS* aid and influence to direct it. It is a conscience founded on religious principle which makes us faithful in the discharge of all public offices, and rightful *ministers of God for good*. —The *ADVOCATE* therefore, will justly be extolled by the employment of his eloquence to protect innocence—detect the guilty—and bring forth the truth. He will never incur the curse of those, who *call evil good, and good evil—that put darkness for light, and light for darkness—that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter:—which justify the wicked for reward—and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.*

HE who takes the *SEAT* of *JUDGMENT*, will thus *fit upon the throne of*
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his glory.—He will have on the beautiful garments of holiness—Faithfulness will be the girdle of his loins—He will be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace—Mercy and truth will go before his face—Righteousness and equity will be the habitation of his seat—but, withal, he beareth not the sword in vain—He is the minister of God—a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

Religion, moreover, teaches us all the **SOCIAL** duties, and enforces in many parts of its doctrine, obedience to the laws, and the civil powers. But as human laws extend only to the outward man in favor of liberty, life, and property—so religion strikes at the root of those evils, which the insufficiency of the law cannot reach. In order to extenuate and alleviate that misery in the world which must otherwise arise from our disorderly passions, to the annoyance of the public welfare and happiness—it regulates the

temper and inclinations—it excites us to acts of humanity, friendship, generosity, charity, and hospitality—it inculcates every where the virtues of candour, gentleness, gratitude, and the very love of our country. And under this last consideration, it enjoins that most necessary duty, that great lesson, which every sect and party, of whatever denomination among us, should learn, of—*MODERATION*: which again teaches us, not to suppose that *OUR* habits of thinking, are to be the standard of *OTHER* men's notions—that God's mercies may not be greater than our prejudices however great—that none can be saved out of *OUR* communion—or, that *as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all may not be made alive*.—It, moreover, points out that happy medium between church persecution, and a want of all church discipline.—It equally befriends a test for the sake of our safety, and toleration for the sake of non-conformists :—It is the landmark between the prerogative
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of kings, and the privilege of their subjects.—It avoids every species of violence or excess in parties :—It in all things tends to favor liberty, and to prevent licentiousness.

These are conjointly duties incumbent on all, who wish well to a civil establishment of religion in the community—and they are so many arguments in favor of the utility of such an establishment.

To speak now of those duties which relate to our conduct under the protection of civil government.—And here I shall be concise, since these admit not of such latitude as the former, and are generally better understood : time too reminds me at present not to be too long in the discussion.

The life—liberty—and property of man, are his dearest privileges.—These, under the direction of the civil powers, are se-

cured to him by the laws of his country. Submission and obedience to those laws and powers, are therefore due.—Thus subordination and subjection exist, as duties in the nature of government—and indeed they are inherent in the very nature of things.—For, as in the works of nature, God-Almighty hath adjusted every part, so as to make it serviceable, in some measure, to the support of the whole world—thus—in that part which concerns mankind, hath he allotted several stations, and made each subservient to some general end. Hence those duties of liberality and relief to the poor from the rich :—service and obedience to the rich from the poor :—protection to the weak from the power of the great :—instruction to the simple from the wisdom of the wise.—Thus we see, without subordination and subjection, no society can possibly subsist.—No society ever did subsist without them. In the first hordes or clans of men, before any regular govern-

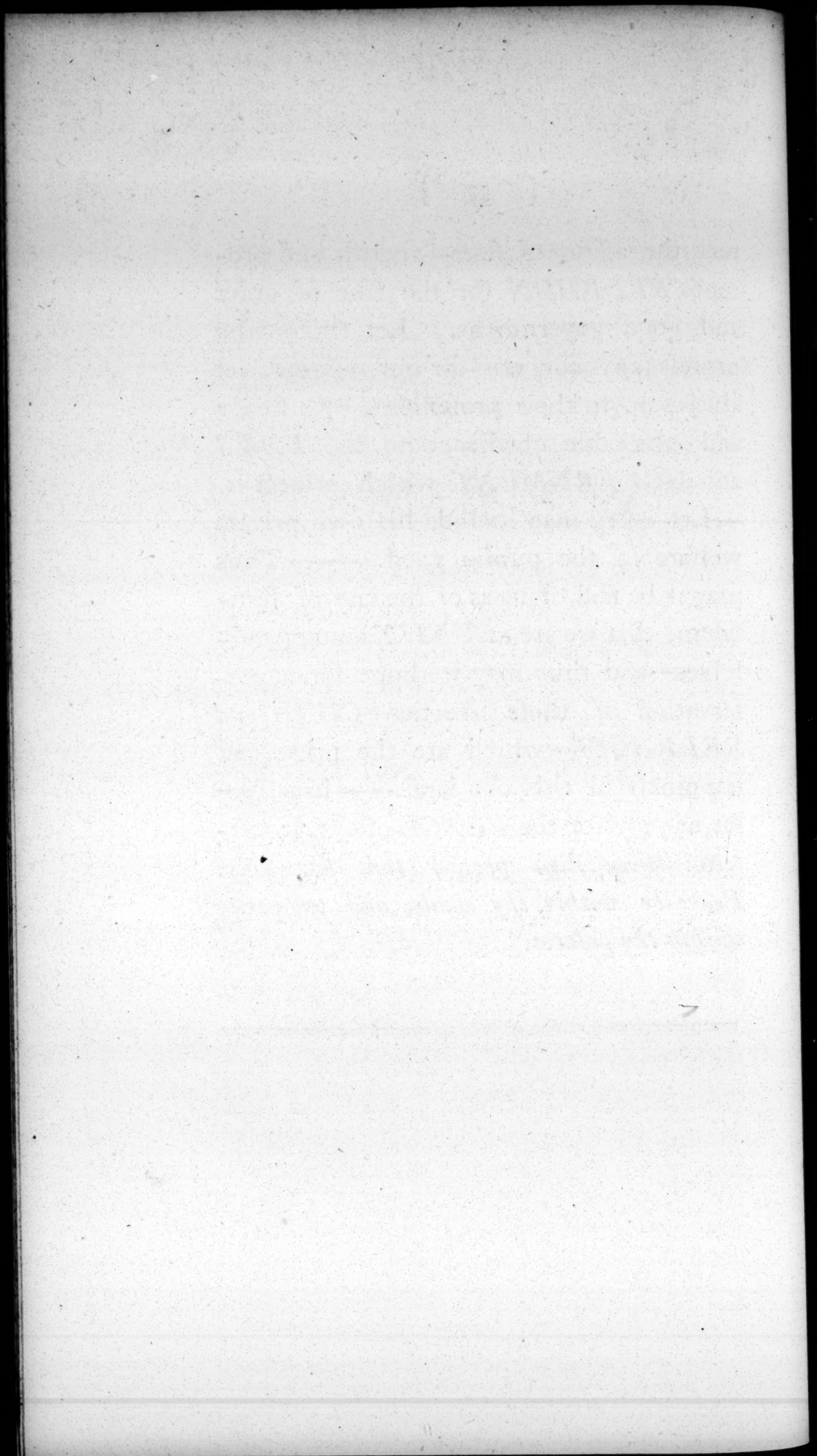
ment existed, the wise, of course, ruled the ignorant—the strong the weak.—*Let every soul therefore (saith the Scripture) be subject to the higher powers, for there is no power but of GOD.*

The conclusion is, that this order of things, which is the appointment of God, and the object of every government, should induce the habit of contentment among all, even the poorest.—For the poor may be assured, that God hath not, by this order, dealt unequally his blessings among us. If the poor man be obliged to work—he hath health (the greatest blessing) in return. If he hath not the wealth—he hath not the cares of the rich. If he hath not their delicacies of food—he hath not their ailments. If he hath not their power—he is not subject to the same hatred and envy that they are. If he hath but few things to satisfy his wants—he hath but few wants to be satisfied. If he sees little of the pleasures

of life—he sees little too of its temptations.

In a word—let us lay these truths to our hearts, and seriously consider the nature of our respective duties. Let those in high stations beware of the pride of this world, and the silly shew of greatness too generally displayed among them: let them countenance and support by such means as their opulence and power give them, their brethren of *mean* condition. Let the poor submit with cheerfulness to the order of Providence, which has placed them in *that* condition. Let us all act like men who are born to live in society together, and in mutual want of the assistance of each other.—And since our civil and religious interests are so connected, as that the safety of the one does ultimately depend on the prosperity of the other, and that church and state cannot be well divided, but must *STAND or FALL TOGETHER*—let those who govern and direct

rect the affairs of state—cherish and promote *RELIGION* for the sake of order and good government. Let those who profess any concern for our religion, act always up to their professions, by a steady and peaceable obedience to the *LAWS* and *GOVERNMENT* which protect it. —Let every man include his own private welfare in the public good.——Thus may it be said of us as of the city of Jerusalem, that we are at *UNITY* among ourselves—and thus may we hope for a preservation of those liberties—*CIVIL and RELIGIOUS*—which are the pride and happiness of this our land.——Finally—let us pray for the *PEACE* of our Jerusalem: *They shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.*



A
SERMON

PREACHED

AT

DORCHESTER,

AT THE

ASSIZES,

BEFORE

THE HONOURABLE

Sir Nash Grose, Knt.

AND

THE HONOURABLE

Sir A. Thompson, Knt.

ON

JULY 15,

1796.

SEYMOUR

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SERMON IV.

I COR. xii. 21, 22.

The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee, nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you.——Nay—much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST is here compared by the Apostle to a man's body, consisting of divers members, all vitally united in one common sympathy and usefulness, having each their distinct functions (some indeed more, some less honorable) allotted to them.——This similitude

litude is applicable to the whole bulk of mankind, and in it, to every family, society, and kingdom. Various orders in each must exist—degrees of superiority and inferiority are essential to their very being—and reciprocal wants and dependence necessarily create reciprocal subordination and subjection. In this world, *high and low, rich and poor, meet—and must act—together, the Lord is the maker of them all.* Various duties arise out of this order of things—so that, as the lower part of mankind stand in need of the higher to protect and relieve them, the higher part are in duty bound to yield their protection and relief—and as the higher part cannot exist without the labour and industry of the lower (*for those members of the body which seem to be most feeble, are most necessary*) the lower part are bound to contribute all the fruits which their labour and industry can produce.—Thus it is, that in the several relations of private subordination between children and their parents—wives and their husbands—servants and their masters—the
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younger and their elders—the Scriptures have given general directions concerning the duties they owe each other—and in respect to all public subordination under government—they say—*Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the King, as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them, that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.*

This doctrine, we see, though in one sense it seem to bring us somewhat upon a level with each other, yet in another and more proper signification of it, strikes deeply at the root of that pretended equality and independence, so much the topic of the present hour. Indeed, it does not appear to me, that men even in their natural capacity, prior to the institution of civil governments, as they now exist, were ever in a perfect state of equality and independence; however writers of the highest rank may have avowed this doctrine,
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in order, perhaps, to serve the particular ends and purposes of the day.

If men, then, ever were in this perfect state of equality and independence, at what time did this equality and independence, pray, exist?—Did it exist at the time of the *CREATION*?—Did not God most wisely *then* create *ONE* man only, for the purposes probably of avoiding the confusion consequent upon a creation of a *NUMBER* of *EQUAL* and *INDEPENDENT* beings—all turned loose to struggle, like brute-beasts, for mastery and pre-eminence?—Had, too, this disorderly system taken place, must not, according to the supposition of some, the wise still have ruled the ignorant, the strong the weak?—In the very gifts he has bestowed on men, God has marked out the lines, we see, of subordination and subjection to each other: our different abilities and endowments both of mind and body most clearly denote this state of things.

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As God did not, then, when he created man—did he when he created *WOMAN*, and joined them in society together, ordain this state of equality and independence?—Did he not contrariwise ordain, for the best ends, no doubt, of order and good government, obedience to the woman, and that her husband should *rule over her*?

Did he at the *UNIVERSAL DELUGE*, when mankind were swept from off the face of the earth, and, as it were, afresh created—did he *then* ordain that this new generation should be all free—equal—and independent?—Did he not take especial care, as in the first creation, so on this occasion, that all should proceed from one common stock, and give *PATERNAL* authority its full power?

Whence, then, does this boasted independence and equality proceed?—and at what time did it take its date?—Shall it be said, that at this day there are, as there

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always have been, nations barbarous and savage in their ways, who have no law or rule of action to direct them, no Judge or persons with authority to punish crimes and redress their grievances—and who live in obedience only to the mere dictate of will and passion?—But, is it true, that even these nations are destitute of all sort of subordination and restraint?—They are surely subject to the leaders of their several clans or tribes. Neither is it possible from the present state of barbarism and ignorance among these, to reason at all respecting their natural equality and independence. A barbarism and ignorance this! into which these nations, sent forth from others at first, as Colonies, after various migrations, have, as a punishment inflicted by God for ancient apostacy, been permitted to degenerate—but by no means the effect of nature, claiming independency and freedom as its just and undoubted right and prerogative!

Away, then, with such unfounded and
unworthy

unworthy notions of the first origin of society and government, as to make it dependent on a compact or the free consent of every individual, whose wants and necessities drove them to this source of their existence. True it undoubtedly is, that the general wants and imperfections of our nature are what keep society together, when once formed, and are its best bond and cement—but society itself owes not its beginning to any original contract or agreement.—An able and learned commentator on our laws, has exposed the falsity of this opinion, where he says, “ Not that we can believe with some theoretical writers, that there ever was a time, when there was no such thing as society; and that from the impulse of reason, and through a sense of their wants and weaknesses, individuals met together in a large plain, entered into an original contract, and chose the tallest man present to be their governor. This notion (says he) of an actually existing unconnected state of nature, is too wild to be seriously admit-

admitted: and besides, is plainly contradictory to the revealed accounts of the primitive origin of mankind, and their propagation two thousand years afterwards, both which were effected by the means of single families."

Never; therefore, greater nonsense crept into the head of man, than that idea so prevalent of late, of perfect equality and independence among men. We know in another country what this idea hath produced—universal anarchy and disorder—such a ferocious, sanguinary spirit—as the page of history hath never yet had occasion to describe.—In all annals of the most barbarous times, there hath never yet appeared such a wanton display of crimes and murder. Even the imagination hath never yet depicted in its tragic art such scenes to excite our terror.—Yet this idea hath been introduced among ourselves, and supported by men—as the best invention of their wit—the best produce of their literary labours—under the
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specious title of *PHILOSOPHY*.——But this hath been our misfortune—this the characteristic mischief of which we have had reason to complain.——There hath been a philosophy ushered in somehow unawares among us, which makes this, though they term it an enlightened, a very vicious age we live in. A philosophy! falsely so called—and boasted of by men of science *vainly puffed up*. Half-witted men—half read—half taught—with just sense and learning enough to raise doubts and difficulties, but too little to solve and clear them. These men in their deep researches after wisdom, seem chiefly to found their philosophy in opposition—opposition to all government, ecclesiastical as well as civil—and opposition even to religion itself.—We thank God, however, there have been philosophers of the greatest name, who have been supporters of our excellent constitution both in Church and State, who have founded their philosophy too in religious principles. One of them (and a lawyer) hath
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very wisely observed—that, “A little philosophy inclineth men’s minds to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men’s minds about to religion.”

In short, it is in the moral as in the natural world.—For as in the creation of the universe, all things are made by a due harmony and subordination to conspire together for the good of the immense fabric, and that whole fabric is supported and upheld by the mutual help and assistance of its particular parts—so in human life, the same harmony and subordination is intended to exist. Different stations are allotted to us all, and each station has its particular duty assigned for the good order and welfare of the whole community.

HE who by his infinite wisdom prescribed rules to himself—who impressed certain principles on inanimate matter, and gave laws of motion to that matter from which it should never depart—*HE*,
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who ordered the immense planetary system to be subject to a fixed decree, and appointed the moon for certain seasons, as likewise the sun to know his going down—*HE*, who made both the vegetable and animal creation in the secret œconomy of their nature to preserve an established progress, and for the support of both, caused fire and hail, snow and vapours, wind and storm, to fulfil their intended uses—*HE*, who commanded the waters of the sea, and ordained, that the waves thereof should not pass their bounds—*HE*, who in all things is a God of *ORDER*—hath instituted certain immutable laws of human nature for the regulation of our conduct, and hath imparted to us the gift of reason to discover those laws. But reason being corrupt, the light of revelation hath been likewise added. On these two laws, the natural and divine, hang all human laws, which must never contradict these, though they superadd to them.

As to our own particular laws, and the
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constitutional government of this country, they have long been the envy and admiration of the whole world—and whatever may be said of the corruption supposed by some to be generally prevalent at present, certain it is, that our courts of judicature at least are uncontaminated and incorrupt. The independence of our Judges is a pledge of security to us here.—Here impartial justice is administered—and liberty, which is the blessing of an Englishman, is ensured to the meanest individual, as well as all injury and oppression punished in those, who may be of the greatest consequence in the land.—Here no authority can screen the guilty—no poverty expose the innocent.—That would be (says the great Roman orator and statesman*) the best constituted government which should partake

* Statuo esse optime constitutam rempublicam, quæ ex tribus generibus illis, regali, optimo, et populari, confusa modice.

CIC. Fragm. de Rep. 2.

in a moderate degree of those three species of government, monarchy—aristocracy—and democracy. A succeeding Roman writer of great acuteness, it is true, considers this doctrine as impracticable, and fit only to be commended by speculative men: for (says he) should such a government be established, it could never continue long in existence.*

THANK GOD! our government does exist in opposition to the remark of the last famed writer—and may it continue long, very long indeed to exist! In it every advantage is blended, and every inconvenience avoided of the three separate forms of government.—The people—the

* *Cunctas nationes et urbes populus, aut primores, aut singuli regunt: delecta ex his et constituta reipublicæ forma laudari facilius quam evenire, vel, si evenit, haud diuturna esse potest.*

TAC. ANN. I. 4.

nobles—and the monarch, have each such a happy share of the civil authority lodged in their hands—that each can exercise its own free will to carry into execution, or to controul, the separate or united purposes of the other two. *The eye, here, cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee—nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you.*—And so through the several stations and ranks of men.—The monarch cannot say unto the husbandman—I have no need of you—nor the merchant to the manufacturer—I have no need of you. *Nay—much more, those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary—*I mean—the general class of the **LOWER ORDERS** of the **PEOPLE**.—And let this consideration be a comfort to them, that their lot in this world is the appointment of God himself——Let it teach them to lead a peaceable and contented life, under all their present sufferings—Let it engender hope—and bring them to the joyous reflection, that, as our Saviour himself was, while on earth, in a mean
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and low condition—so he will finally prepare for them (as the Scripture literally declares) a place with himself in the *KINGDOM* of *HEAVEN*.

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